

TOWN MEETING NEWS

Camden, Maine May 2011

Camden's **2011 Annual Town Meeting** will be held June 14 and 15. Residents may register to vote at the Town Office Monday through Friday between 8 am and 3:30 pm, until 4:30 pm on Tuesday June 7, or on Election Day at the polls with identification and proof of residency. Town Meeting is your opportunity to have a voice in Camden's future.

BALLOT VOTING Tuesday, June 14, 2011:

The polls will be open from 8 am to 8 pm at the *Camden Public Safety Building* for voters to act on *Articles 1 through 3* of the Annual Meeting Warrant. Absentee ballots for these articles are also available at the Camden Town Office between 8 am and 3:30 pm Monday through Friday, prior to voting day.

Article 1 is for the election of a moderator to preside at Town Meeting. The polls will open as soon as a Moderator has been elected.

Article 2 is for the election of the following:

- Two Select Board Members for three years (Select Board Members shall serve as Overseers of the Poor, Assessors and Wastewater Commissioners). There are three candidates: Karen Grove, James Heard, and Donald A. White Jr. Voters may also write in candidates.
- Two Directors of Maine School Administrative District #28/CSD #19 for three-year terms. There are three candidates: Matthew Dailey, Willard J. Hubbard, and Dale E. Landrith. Voters may also write in candidates.
- One Personnel Board Member for three years. There is one candidate: David Miramant. Voters may also write in candidates.

Article 3 is a proposed amendment to the Camden Subdivision Ordinance, Article 9 - *Inspections and Enforcement*. This proposed amendment is intended to release the Town from possible repair costs for damages to subdivision roads during the construction phase. The concept behind this amendment is to create a threshold before the Town would accept the responsibility for

subdivision roads that have been developed. By placing a 75% threshold of developed lots, the risk of the Town incurring expenses for repairs caused by damage to the roads during development of the remaining lots is reduced. The full text of the amendment to be enacted by this is available in the Town Clerk's office during regular business hours. Approval of this article is recommended by Planning Board by a vote of 6-0.

BUSINESS MEETING June 15, 2011 at 7 pm:

Articles 4 through 14, including the proposed FY12 Town Budget, will be acted upon at the business meeting on Wednesday, June 15 at the *Camden Opera House* beginning at 7 pm. Please refer to the 2011 Annual Report, pages 87 through 94 for the articles and the budget detail.

Articles 4 through 8 are *annual housekeeping articles* which set the tax due date and fix the interest rate for unpaid taxes for the upcoming year, authorize the Select Board to apply for and accept grants, gifts etc. on behalf of the town, authorize the Select Board to transfer funds between budgetary categories, authorize the disposal of personal property, and authorize the Board to dispose of tax acquired property.

Articles 6-A and 6-B: The annual article authorizing the Board to dispose of tax-acquired property is this year broken down into A and B to offer voters a choice regarding the disposition of the tax-acquired Apollo Tannery Property. Presently, all other tax acquired property may be sold by the Select Board, pursuant to a standard article (for the last several years the Tannery property has been excluded from such authority). As a town-owned parcel, the Tannery site does not generate tax income. In addition, municipal expenses include debt payments, from the environmental cleanup that was carried out at Town expense, in the amount of \$61,000 per year – there are 15 years remaining on this debt. In June 2008, 69% of those voting approved a set of Guiding Principles that defined the ideal criteria

under which the site would be re-developed, including the provision that the trees that line the street must remain. At the November 2008 Town Meeting, approval of a voter petition resulted in a requirement that the sale of the Tannery parcel must be approved by a referendum vote.

Article 6A plainly provides that, if adopted, the Select Board will have the authority to sell the Tannery property without any further action by the voters. However, the sale of the Tannery property must be consistent with the Guiding Principles recommended by the Tannery Redevelopment Workgroup and subsequently approved by Camden voters. Therefore, if a business proposes to purchase the Tannery property upon terms that are inconsistent with the Guiding Principles, and the Select Board feels it is a proposal worth pursuing, the sale would have to be decided by Special Town Meeting vote.

If *Article 6A* is approved, *Article 6B* will not need to be considered by the voters. **Article 6B** is offered in the event that the voters choose not to authorize the Select Board to sell the Tannery property, subject to the Guiding principles as described above. The language of *Article 6B* is identical to language adopted by the voters in prior years. Thus, *Article 6B* maintains the same marketing provisions of the Guiding Principles previously approved, and maintains the current restriction that the Select Board cannot sell the Tannery property without voter approval through a secret ballot referendum.

If both Articles 6A and 6B are defeated, the Select Board will not have the authority to dispose of any new tax-acquired property. The Tannery site may still be marketed under the current provisions of the Guiding Principles, but will require a secret ballot referendum on the final sale of the property.

Article 9 covers the *revenue side of the proposed FY12 Budget*. It designates the estimated non-property tax revenue to offset the proposed expenditures, thereby reducing the property tax commitment. See pages 91 and 92 of the Annual Report for detail of the estimated revenues.

Revenues overall have been adjusted based on several years average and known changes in

revenue projections. Estimated revenues remain low in a number of lines, particularly vehicle excise taxes (-20% over 6 years), building permits, and State Revenue Sharing (-24% over 3 years). Downshifting of State deficits undermines the Town's ability to control the costs of basic local services. Overall, estimated revenues are slightly higher than FY11 but still far below historical levels. One noteworthy increase in *Revenues* is the additional use of \$122,500 in surplus in the Select Board's recommended budget to offset the cost of the Laite Beach Improvements. The Budget Committee approved an earlier total for Revenues that did not include this additional use of surplus.

Article 10 contains the *expenditure side of the proposed FY12 Budget*. If approved, along with the designation of revenues in Article 9, the 2011-2012 proposed budget represents a 3.7% increase in the estimated municipal tax (*The projection is based on an estimated total tax base for the upcoming year*). This budget is for municipal services (General Fund) only and excludes assessments from Mid-Coast Solid Waste, Knox County, and the School Districts.

Following are some of the highlights of the proposed municipal budget, listed by budgetary category. See pages 93-94 of the Annual Report for further detail. **Overall**, increasing fuel costs have had an impact on many departments. We have not locked in a fuel price for the upcoming season as we have in the past. Our price was \$2.055 per gallon in 2009-2010 and \$2.349 for the current year. The FY12 budget includes an estimate of \$3.00 per gallon. It now looks like that may be low; therefore, we will reassess anticipated costs and the availability of current year carry over funds closer to Town Meeting, to be certain that we do not need to increase the proposed FY12 budget for fuel oil.

Wages in all departments have been calculated to include a 2% COLA for union and non-union employees.

General Government: With the addition of full time development staff this year, the CEO/Planner and his Administrative Assistant, along with the associated benefits, have been moved into the *Planning/Development* Department with the Development Director. The Assessor's Agent

position has been reduced to a part-time position and the Opera House Manager's position has been increased to full-time beginning July 1, 2011. Therefore, *Administration/Finance* now includes seven full time positions, the Assessor's Agent at roughly 80% full-time, and miscellaneous part time staff and the Select Board. *Planning/Development* includes three full-time positions and miscellaneous part-time support staff. The *Opera House-Auditorium* budget includes the increase to make the Manager's position full-time. With the above changes, *General Government* expenditures reflect a slight overall decrease from the current year.

Public Safety: The Public Safety budget provides for continuation of the current service level and a continuation of a commitment to training for both Police Officers and Firemen. The *Police Department* budget includes estimated wages for slightly less than full staffing, as we always seem to have a vacancy at least a portion of the year. *Dispatch* services with Knox Regional Communications continue to serve our emergency and departments' dispatch needs well. The *Fire Department* continues to focus on training and community education. The *Street Light* budget reflects a more stable pricing in energy supply costs and energy delivery costs. *Hydrant Assessments* have leveled out this year. Overall, as with General Government, the *Public Safety* budget request is a slight decrease over the current year.

Highways, Streets, and Bridges: The existence of a Winter Maintenance Reserve Fund allows us to maintain a more conservative level of annual funding for winter maintenance. Increases in the *Public Works* budget reflect the increased cost of materials and fuel and the need to invest more in infrastructure repair and improvements. In addition to maintenance work, projects planned this season were the completion of the bridge and drainage work on Molyneaux Road and Belmont Avenue. However, due to the higher priority work at Laite Beach this season, completion of the bridge work has been postponed. Funds for the Belmont Avenue work are included with the Capital Improvements budget. The difference in the DPW recommendation of the Budget Committee and the Select Board is in a Public Works building

maintenance line. The Budget Committee reduced this line in order to free up an additional \$5,000 for the Camden Public Library. The Select Board restored the building maintenance funds without reducing the Library funding; hence the \$5,000 difference in the two recommended total budgets.

Health & Welfare: *Provider Agencies and Community Services* are funded at slightly less than FY11 levels as the total requests have decreased. We continue to be able to meet the needs of some agencies through the Town's trust funds.

Leisure Services: The Trustees for the *Camden Public Library* have requested an increase in their appropriation to offset the increasing expenses and increased usage of the Library, the Amphitheater and Harbor Park for FY12.

Harbor revenues are anticipated to increase again this year as weather and the economy allow. The projected expenditures for the department remain within the revenue generated by harbor rates.

The *Recreation* and *Parks* budgets cover the continuation of programs and park maintenance. Costs for full time staff with both the Parks and the Recreation Departments are, of course, charged to the Snow Bowl during the winter season. Historically, the General fund budget has included funds for the *Snow Bowl's* operating cost, a contribution meant to match the Toboggan Weekend fund-raising efforts in support of the Snow Bowl. Due to the financial success of the Snow Bowl this past winter, the General Fund Budget does not include such a contribution for FY12, nor does it include tax funding for the Snow Bowl's capital needs for FY12.

The *Dam* budget covers Camden's share of repairs and maintenance to the lake dams and repairs for the Montgomery Dam. The budget also includes the monitoring of the Seabright Dam. Wastewater staff manages the operations of Seabright Hydro, which are covered in a separate fund outside of the General Fund.

The Parks staff takes care of all Town cemeteries and the mowing of *Harbor Park*. The cost of the Harbor Park mowing is offset with revenue from

the Library budget; the funds are shown as revenue to the General Fund.

Cemeteries: The Trustees of the Cemetery Association have requested a substantial appropriation increase to offset the expenses of the Cemeteries for FY12. This increase is due to the decline in investment income. Both the Budget Committee and the Select Board have recommended a \$19,000 increase; however, this level of funding is still \$10,000 short of their request. The Trustees contract with the Town Parks Department to care for the cemeteries. The Cemetery Maintenance budget is the department's cost for that work. The maintenance budget is completely offset with funds from the Association; the funds are shown as revenue to the General Fund.

Debt, Capital, Contingency: Debt Service payments are separated by Principal and Interest. Debt obligations on two pieces of equipment, the addition to the Public Works building, and a combined infrastructure project have been paid off, resulting in a reduction of debt payments for FY12. This has allowed us to invest more in direct capital improvements.

The Capital Reserves and Capital Improvements budgets are the focus of this year's budget increases. Very little of the Capital Improvement Plan has been funded in recent years, in particular the plan to set aside funds in reserve accounts for future planned expenditures. The proposed FY12 budget reflects an effort to restore funding for capital planning.

Included in Capital Improvements is funding for a replacement Police vehicle, the installation of a truck bay vehicle exhaust system at the Public Safety Building, a replacement Public Works 1-ton truck and replacement of a box culvert on Belmont Avenue. Plans also include drainage, shoreline access and bank stabilization improvements at Laite Beach. It is hoped that the cost (\$165,500) of the needed improvements to Laite Beach can be offset with some private or grant funding, thereby reducing the need to withdraw funds from the Town's surplus.

Article 11 relates to the State law, known as LD 1, regarding *spending limitations*. The law limits how much the municipal portion of the property tax commitment (excluding school and county costs) can grow from year to year. The limit is established by adding the average real personal income growth (a % that is calculated by the State for this year to be 1.66%) to the property growth factor (a % derived by comparing new value to total value, computed to be 0.56%) in a community. To calculate the limitations for this year these factors are to be applied to the FY11 tax commitment using 4/1/10 assessment information.

Camden's LD1 spending limitation growth has been calculated to be \$164,837. *The net tax increase of the FY12 Budget as proposed by the Budget Committee falls under the limitation by \$848; the FY12 Budget as proposed by the Select Board is over this limitation by \$4,152.*

LD1 includes provisions to increase the spending limitation if needed by a vote of Town Meeting. That exact limit will need to be calculated just prior to the vote based on the actions of the voters on all money articles. The vote on this question, if needed, must be by written ballot.

Articles 12 through 14 cover the election of officials for the Pascal Fund Trust, the Budget Committee, and the Budget Nominating Committee. All candidates are nominated from the floor at Town Meeting.

For Reference:

FY11 taxable value: 1,103,355,882
Mil rate: 13.47/thousand (.01347)
Municipal portion: 26.7% or 4.00/thousand
(excludes MCSW & overlay)

Therefore, the tax on each 100,000 property value is \$1,347. The municipal portion of that tax is \$ 400.

FY12: If we assume a net taxable value of 1,105,000,000, the following applies:

	Taxes raised	Tax on 100,000 value
1 cent on tax rate:	\$11,050	\$ 1.00
\$1.00 on rate:	\$1,105,000	\$100.00